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New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 79 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish at the outset to thank delegations for being punctual and thus demonstrating their sense of responsibility.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I should first like to express my satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, the representative of Belgium to the Conference on Disarmament, as Chairman of the First Committee. Your experience as a representative in the Conference on Disarmament will surely help delegations in this body of the General Assembly.

I also want to pay tribute to Mr. Mothusi Nkgowe of Botswana for the gentle and effective manner in which he directed the work of this Committee during the fifty-second session.

The year 1998 has been rich in events falling within the realm of the First Committee. My delegation welcomes in this connection the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and commends the Secretary-General on the appointment of Jayantha Dhanapala to lead it. Ambassador Dhanapala, with whom I had the privilege to work on many occasions, in particular in the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, is one of the most prominent personalities in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The international community has witnessed significant progress in the area of conventional weapons, such as the fulfilment, on 16 September 1998, of the conditions for the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Brazil was among the 120 countries that signed the Ottawa Convention in December 1997. We are pleased that more and more countries are acceding to the Ottawa treaty, and it is our hope that those States that still find themselves unable to join the anti-personnel landmines Convention will do so in the near future. Countries of Latin America are already in the process of following up the Ottawa Convention. A significant step was taken by President Mahuad of Ecuador and President Fujimori of Peru in initiating the preparation of a plan for the demining of the Peruvian-Ecuadorian border.

Another important event is the multilateral action being pursued in the field of small arms. In our region the process of small-arms control was greatly enhanced with the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit . Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, signed by the members of the Organization of American States (OAS) in November 1997. Reference should also be made to the initiatives undertaken by various African countries, led by Mali, South Africa and Mozambique, and the agreements in that field reached by subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) aimed at curbing the spread of light weapons in that continent.

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Within the United Nations, Brazil is represented in the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms convened by the Secretary-General and favours the organization of an international conference on the illicit trade of small arms. It is our understanding that such a meeting should be preceded by a transparent and open-ended preparatory process which would allow for the definition of the mandate, objective and scope of the conference.

Brazil regards increased transparency in the field of armaments as an important tool to enhance confidence among nations, and in this sense we encourage participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. My Government has been providing the United Nations, since the first year of operation of the Register, with data on imports, exports and purchases of arms from domestic sources, as well as the so-called background information. Despite some increase in the number of States participating in the Register as of today, it comprises only half of the membership of the United Nations. The OAS is taking a step forward in this area by commencing the discussion of a convention on the notification of acquisition of the conventional arms covered by the United Nations Register.

In the dreadful area of weapons of mass destruction, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), under the leadership of my compatriot, Director-General José Bustani, has made good progress in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The number of States members of OPCW increased from 87 to 117 in the current year. With OPCW's support, a seminar on the processes of presentation of declarations and inspections was organized last month in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil was able to share with fellow Latin American and Caribbean countries the experience acquired in the setting up of its National Authority, which oversees more than 8,000 industrial establishments. A total of 168 countries have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, and it is our hope that it can soon reach universality.

Brazil attaches special importance to the strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons and in the setting up of a verification mechanism that would bring that treaty in line with second-generation international disarmament instruments. We will continue to take part actively in the Ad Hoc Group established in 1994 with the aim of developing a credible and effective protocol capable of tightening international security in this area.

Some progress has been noted in the Conference on Disarmament. The Ad Hoc Committee on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons was finally established. Brazil was pleased with the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The designation of three Special Coordinators for the items on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, transparency in armaments and anti-personnel landmines was also positive. One gets the impression that a spirit of cooperation is returning to the Conference on Disarmament. To our regret, however, no progress was possible in nuclear disarmament.

The nuclear tests conducted in May and June in South Asia came as a reminder that the danger of nuclear Armageddon is always present. The temptation to resort to atomic weapons as a form of national self-affirmation is strong. Brazil condemns all nuclear tests and urges the nuclear-capable States to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Having renounced the nuclear option, Brazil persists in the effort to prohibit nuclear weapons. As an interim measure, we are also striving to limit the geographical scope of the nuclear menace through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. This year again, a group of like-minded countries will put forward a draft resolution on the nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. The draft resolution will aim at promoting cooperation among the four established nuclear-weapon-free zones — created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba — and at encouraging other regions of the world to join efforts in the same direction. The Political Declaration of the Ushuaia Summit established the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries and the associated States of Chile and Bolivia as a zone of peace, free from weapons of mass destruction. Another step in that direction is the convening, in Buenos Aires this month, of the fifth meeting of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic. The 24 States members of the Zone continue to uphold their goal of keeping their area free from nuclear weapons.

Last July Brazil was honoured by the visit of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. President Cardoso invited him to the signing ceremony of the instruments by which Brazil acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and ratified the CTBT. In a symbolic act, the ratification instrument of the CTBT was handed to the Secretary-General. Brazil is one of the 44 countries listed in annex 2 of the CTBT, whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to come into force. Only nine other countries in that group have ratified it.

On 18 September Foreign Minister Lampreia deposited the instrument of accession to the NPT in Washington, and the Brazilian Ambassadors to the Russian Government and to the Court of Saint James did the same in Moscow and London. By adhering to the NPT, Brazil is helping to reinforce the non-proliferation regime and is reaffirming its credentials for urging the nuclear-weapon States to renounce the development and possession of nuclear weapons.

In his message to Congress last year, President Cardoso pointed out that Brazil knows that "the NPT by itself does not represent a definitive solution to the problem of nuclear weapons". The Treaty was conceived in the 1960s, as a temporary solution to the problem of nuclear proliferation, which could have led to an increase in the number of nuclear-armed countries and to multiplication of the risks of nuclear confrontation. In the ceremony of deposit of the instrument of accession, Minister Lampreia stated:

> "Brazil therefore strongly rejects the notion that nuclear weapons can bring security to any nation. On the contrary, they breed only tension and instability and constitute a major roadblock to international peace and security. Our decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons flows precisely from our determination to pursue an even greater role in the area of international peace and security. As a member of the NPT, we will work more actively and critically to ensure that peaceful nuclear activities in non-nuclear weapon States and international cooperation in this field are not restricted and to help to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons".

When the National Congress of Brazil approved accession to the NPT it also mandated the Administration to pursue the objective of nuclear disarmament; that is enshrined in the very legislative decree that approved the Treaty. Brazilian representatives are thus instructed to participate in the activities relating to NPT membership, in particular the year 2000 Review Conference and its preparatory work.

The joint declaration (A/53/138, annex) of 9 June 1998, subscribed to by the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden, launched the quest for a new agenda in the area of nuclear disarmament. It points towards a nuclear-free world and reaffirms the belief that just limiting the spread of nuclear weapons is not enough. The NPT will not have fulfilled its goal, as set out in article VI, until all existing nuclear weapons are gone.

A clear advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice denied legitimacy to atomic weaponry and stated that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We understand from that advisory opinion that unlimited procrastination in starting the discussion on the elimination of nuclear weapons will not be possible.

Brazil defends the primacy of international law, and those principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations which speak for the sovereign equality of States and against the use of force or the threat thereof against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. All weapons of mass destruction must be banned. The international community should strive to reach the end of this century with the adoption of a time-bound agreement that will ensure the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

In emphasizing today the areas of non-proliferation and disarmament we do not mean to reduce the importance of the First Committee in the discussion of issues pertaining to international peace and security and related aspects. At some time in our future meetings we will have to turn to the root causes of the conflicts erupting at the end of the twentieth century. Race discrimination and poverty are certainly among such causes. References were made to them, both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, in the recent discussion of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. As stated by my delegation in that discussion, we must devise ways to involve the Economic and Social Council and other agencies of the United Nations system in our struggle against those causes of conflict. Let us prepare to renew our fight against ethnic-based hatred and to seriously promote the eradication of poverty as we prepare for the new millennium.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I am very pleased to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau as well as your predecessor, our colleague from Botswana, on the remarkable work accomplished during the previous session.

I should also like to congratulate Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala on the results achieved since his nomination at the head of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and to assure him of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

The work of the present session is beginning under special circumstances. Just a short time ago we were welcoming the climate of détente generated by the end of the cold war, which allowed us to make important advances, particularly with regard to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995 and the signature by a large number of countries of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as the conclusion of the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines, which has already entered into force. However, recent developments in South Asia have reminded us that in matters of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, much remains to be done if we are to attain the objective of general and complete disarmament set by the international community at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Furthermore, these developments serve to strengthen our understanding that the non-proliferation regime still has serious shortcomings which must be corrected if we want to ensure that situations similar to those that have taken place in South Asia do not jeopardize the fragile edifice of non-proliferation. In this respect, I should like to share a few thoughts with the Committee.

First, the argument that nuclear disarmament lies within the domain of bilateral negotiation, with multilateral negotiation being of less importance, has been shown to be limited. Recent events have confirmed that the only framework that can deal with the problems of nuclear disarmament and thereby provide all the guarantees of transparency, universality and credibility, while responding to the expectations of the international community as a whole, is that which is offered by multilateral negotiation.

Secondly, this is even more true at a time when globalization is expanding to cover all human activities and when the international community is confronted with global challenges on several fronts, above all that of security, which more than ever can only be collective security. Thus, if we want to keep in step with world developments, we cannot continue to think in terms of the centre enjoying peace and security while the periphery is condemned to instability and insecurity.

Moreover — and this is my third thought — every effort should be made to remove the causes of competition between nuclear Powers and threshold States and to ensure that policies based on a balance of terror are obsolete. For example, there must be an end to laboratory simulations, and we must commit ourselves, as the International Court of Justice urges us in its advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, to "pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/4, para. 182*)

For us — and here I come to my fourth thought — non-proliferation makes sense and can be promoted only if the promotion of nuclear disarmament is guaranteed at the same time. Given that these two regimes are inextricably linked, it is important that the nuclear Powers adopt measures to prove their determination to respect their commitments.

My fifth thought concerns the degree of priority given to nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that it must remain, as the Group of 28 constantly repeats in Geneva, and as the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban stressed recently, the absolute priority and that it should continue to receive the sustained attention of our Organization, especially of those bodies responsible for disarmament, in order to induce the countries concerned to take all the necessary concrete measures, within an agreed time frame, to dismantle all nuclear weapons.

My final thought relates to the Conference on Disarmament. As the appropriate body for the negotiation of normative texts in disarmament matters, it continues to be, in our view, the only one able to give disarmament agreements a universal character and thus to guarantee the conditions for their respect.

It was therefore logical that for all these reasons, being convinced of the need to rid the Earth once and for all of all apocalyptic weapons and to give a new impetus to this important body, Algeria proposed on 30 July the creation of an ad hoc committee on such weapons and an ad hoc committee on banning the production of fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

This initiative contributed to further reflection on the matter and, together with other proposals, led to the creation by the Conference on Disarmament of an ad hoc committee on fissile materials. The decision, although modest in view of the task, makes possible negotiations

aimed at banning the production of fissile materials for military use and should facilitate the initiation of discussions on other aspects linked to nuclear disarmament.

One such aspect relates to the question of negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. My country, which welcomes the creation this year of a negotiation mechanism on this issue, feels that recent international developments should lead us to look seriously into this question. It should be dealt with in a global manner — that is, through an international convention drawn up by the Conference on Disarmament, which would contain strict, unconditional guarantees.

To consolidate this non-proliferation regime, the international community must encourage the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Algeria, the third African State to ratify, on 11 February last, the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty, commonly called the "Pelindaba Treaty", is still profoundly concerned, because the Middle East is so near to Africa, and because of the close links between them, about the lack of progress on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are all the more concerned since all the Arab countries are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while Israel continues to refuse to accede to it and, an even more serious matter, refuses to submit its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

However, it is comforting to observe some positive signs in the area of nuclear disarmament, such as the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which now cover more than 100 countries, linked by commitments in the context of these zones; the decision of India and Pakistan to observe and respect a moratorium on nuclear testing; and, finally, their intention to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In this context, my country welcomes the fact that Brazil has joined the NPT and the CTBT.

The question of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which once again is on our agenda, has been the subject of careful study for several years, with no tangible results in spite of last year's adoption by consensus of a resolution on this question submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement. It is our hope that, transcending narrow national interests, we will be able to decide upon convening the session as soon as possible so that the international community is finally able to make an objective evaluation of what has already been accomplished and what remains to be done to achieve a more secure world for future generations.

In this regard, I wish to recall the appeal made at the Durban summit in September 1998 by the Non-Aligned Movement for the holding of an international conference, preferably in 1999, to try to reach agreement before the end of the century on a step-by-step programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a given time-frame; on the banning of their production, acquisition, development, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of their use; and, finally, on their destruction.

The dynamism of disarmament only makes sense if it encompasses what is for a growing number of States the particularly important and delicate question of the proliferation and illicit transfer of conventional weapons, which is exacerbating new, violent trans-border phenomena such as terrorism and drug-trafficking. While significant efforts have been made in conventional disarmament, efforts which my country welcomes, they have only been brought to bear on importing countries.

Through this exercise, we feel that we need to study the illicit arms trade, whose effects are felt in many regions of the world. Thus, we need not so much to worry about the application of moratoriums and codes of conduct established by the producing countries, as to commit ourselves together to considering the ways and means to stop and dismantle all the hidden and uncontrolled networks that are providing criminals, traffickers and terrorists with their weapons of death and destruction.

It is important in this context to emphasize that States, which are duty-bound to guarantee the protection and security of citizens, should not be placed on an equal footing with criminal groups whose objective is to destabilize States, undermine the values of democracy and terrorize civilian populations.

Algeria, which devotes only a small fraction of its gross domestic product to arms purchases, recognizes that the question of conventional weapons proliferation should receive as much of the international community's attention as that of other types of weapons. We wish, on this occasion, to reiterate our readiness to consider any initiative or constructive action to that end. We therefore note our interest in the Secretary-General's proposal that arms and munitions expenses be lowered to 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product. We also welcome his proposal that data be compiled, researched and published on the arms trade, which fuels most crime and terrorism. This task, we feel, should be undertaken by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

In the context of conventional disarmament, the imminent entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, following the fortieth State ratification, should not make us forget that greater efforts remain to be made, without undermining what has already been accomplished, by the Conference on Disarmament, which we feel must strive without further delay to prepare a negotiated instrument to which most of the mine-producing countries would accede.

The ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines, whose negotiating mandate is almost ready for approval, should be allowed to consider the question of mines which continue to strike at the populations of many countries, including my own. In this respect, it is important to emphasize the unshirkable responsibility of the colonial Powers for the damage caused by anti-personnel landmines. They have the duty to participate in demining the danger zones by providing all the information necessary.

The First Committee's work this year falls at a time when the questions generated by globalization are shaking our confidence and confusing our outlook. If there is one certainty, however, that cannot be shaken by present and future upheavals, it is the need to move towards general and complete disarmament, which alone can guarantee security to all, and to establish greater stability for all peoples of the world. May the work of the First Committee contribute to those goals.

Mr. Effendi (Indonesia): Let me begin by conveying my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I wish also to express our gratitude to the representative of Botswana for the excellent guidance he provided at our previous session.

One of the great contradictions of our times is that, at the end of this century — a time span which has been most dramatic in history and has enriched human life with extraordinary achievements in the evolution of human values as well as in science and technology — we have witnessed the massive application of science and technology to vastly increase humankind's capacity to inflict death and destruction on an unprecedented scale, rather than harnessing it to effectively address the age-old problem of poverty. Consequently, we have failed to end the situation of living in the midst of a chilling and unprecedented phenomenon: At the peak of the world power structure, there exist enough nuclear weapons to destroy all life on Earth. At the mid-level of the world power constellation, there exist vast quantities of conventional armaments which, in scores of conflicts, have exacted an enormous toll in human lives and material devastation.

Paradoxically, at another level, in a vast portion of the world where the population lives in dire poverty, there exists a deprivation inexplicable in terms either of available resources or of money and ingenuity spent on armaments. Although we have many ideas, plans and action programmes to meet the basic needs of the mass of humanity, somehow such humane considerations have taken second place to the spending on wars and conflicts.

It is true that the end of the cold war somewhat reduced the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war. We can draw on the many positive developments that have taken place in this crucial area. Hopefully, in the future, the declared willingness to initiate START III will lead to further significant reductions of nuclear weapons. It is also satisfying to note that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, covering a vast land mass and its peoples, has become an irreversible trend towards a nuclear-free world. Moreover, there are also hopeful signs of the coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) next year, after its required ratification by the signatories.

Nevertheless, the ultimate guarantee for preventing nuclear holocaust is the elimination of nuclear weapons. Thus, these positive developments should not be perceived as diminishing the need for nuclear disarmament. There are worrying signs that nuclear weapons have made a comeback. After steady progress since the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the reduction and elimination of nuclear armaments have, in recent times, come to a halt. Rather than make further deep reductions, some are solidifying their stockpiles and consolidating their weapons infrastructure. Modern designs are being maintained and even upgraded into more sophisticated weaponry and the focus continues to be on new rationalizations for the continued possession of nuclear weapons, rather than for abolishing them. Meanwhile, new nuclear-weapon tests have been conducted.

Denial and discrimination are also evident in the discussions concerning the question of a ban on fissile materials. It is paradoxical to note that, while expressing

willingness to end production of these materials, some are at the same time opposed to giving up existing stocks. There is no point in continuing to produce material that is already available in huge quantities or if the ban applies only to future production and no limits are set on the use of previously produced materials. Such an approach would preserve the status quo and would not contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime or to disarmament.

It is evident now that, three years after the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and after the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, the Treaty has not led us to a more credible non-proliferation regime. Indeed, the failure to undertake any significant or objective discussion on nuclear disarmament since the indefinite extension of the NPT makes it clear that the indefinite extension was a goal in itself and not a means to implement what was agreed upon. The confidence of non-nuclear-weapon States in the strengthened commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to the full implementation of the Treaty has been severely eroded. The rejection of the proposal for a step-by-step approach for the elimination of nuclear arsenals under multilateral auspices is contrary to the commitments undertaken in the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The Review Conference of the year 2000 will therefore be an event of major importance for the international community and should not be reduced to "business as usual".

It is now 10 years since the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was convened, and more than five years have elapsed since the last nuclear arms reduction treaty came into force. Still the Conference on Disarmament has been stymied for lack of progress on nuclear and related issues. Meanwhile, a myriad of unresolved issues has continued to be of pre-eminent concern, calling for a reassessment of our disarmament agenda as well as the formulation of new strategies and approaches. There is also an imperative need to continue to build on the agreements already reached and for concerted efforts towards unresolved issues, which should be addressed at the fourth special session on disarmament (SSOD IV), as they represent a continuing threat to international peace and security.

For Indonesia and other non-aligned countries, the question of convening SSOD IV is of exceptional importance. The position taken by the Non-Aligned Movement offers a broad and viable framework for arriving at a common understanding on how to proceed with the task of its convening. While taking into account the disparate attempts made by the international community to limit armaments in the post-cold-war era, SSOD IV will streamline those endeavours, provide the opportunity to appraise the current global situation and assess the vital issues of implementation or non-implementation of decisions, resolutions and treaties. Such an assessment will be useful and instructive, as valuable conclusions can be drawn from the achievements and failures of the past 10 years, and it will be an opportunity to acknowledge the negative aspects and setbacks and thereby give new impetus to our continuing efforts. In these efforts, the reports of the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament as well as the status of negotiations in bilateral and multilateral forums will provide significant input.

Indonesia would endorse an agenda that includes basic principles and general guidelines for the elimination of nuclear armaments while recognizing the importance of limiting conventional armaments. We also expect that SSOD IV will pronounce itself unambiguously on the need to enhance and strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament and on practical measures to increase the effectiveness of existing machinery. The reports of the Disarmament Commission submitted during the past two years contain a list of agenda items for SSOD IV which warrant our serious consideration. These and other proposals taken together, and given the necessary political will, would offer heightened prospects for the emergence of a consensus on the objectives and agenda of SSOD IV and the drafting of a forward-looking plan of action that may lead to its convening in the foreseeable future. We could thus further the cause of arms limitation and disarmament.

In conclusion, in the post-cold-war era new approaches must replace the old and outdated doctrines. Priorities should continue to be given to new and more stabilizing reductions, with the aims of eliminating nuclear weapons, arresting the acquisition of advanced weapons of mass destruction, maintaining the credibility of the non-proliferation regime, achieving a ban on fissile materials and concluding an international convention against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States. In these endeavours, we have ample guidance: the proposal of the non-aligned countries for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, submitted in 1996 (A/C.1/51/12, annex); the report of the Canberra Commission of 1996; and the joint declaration (A/53/138,

annex) of last June by the Foreign Ministers of eight nations entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". They contain realistic and achievable proposals to ensure that the international community need not endure the frightening prospect of the indefinite possession of these weapons. Equally important, they call for multilaterally negotiated instruments to make nuclear weapons reductions irreversible and move towards their internationally verifiable abolition.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): At the outset, on behalf of the Japanese delegation, I would like to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during its fifty-third session. Your diplomatic experience and skill, as well as your knowledge of disarmament issues, qualities that were amply demonstrated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, will greatly help us conduct fruitful discussions in this Committee. The tasks before us have particular significance this year, and I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

Since the end of the cold war the international community has been facing the difficult task of establishing a new world order for international peace and security. Although we have not been entirely successful, it should also be noted that our earnest and strenuous efforts have borne some fruit, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. While it is true that treaty negotiations and their conclusion are important, it is equally important that they gain universal adherence and are effectively and fully implemented. We should not be complacent and settle for anything less.

It is also noteworthy that the Conference on Disarmament re-established the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear Weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons and set up the Ad Hoc Committee on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. It also nominated six Special Coordinators this year, and the substantive and constructive discussions were conducted by each Special Coordinator.

While there have been genuine achievements in the disarmament field, India and Pakistan shocked the world by conducting nuclear tests that run directly counter to international endeavours for disarmament and non-proliferation.

In his recent statement to the General Assembly, Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi described these events as an enormous challenge to the non-proliferation regime. In stressing the crucial importance of strengthening that regime, he noted that the following five objectives demanded urgent attention: first, universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); secondly, strict export controls on equipment, material and technologies relating to nuclear weapons and missiles, in order to ensure non-proliferation; thirdly, the prevention of further nuclear testing through universal support for the CTBT; fourthly, further progress in nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States; and, fifthly, early conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Japan considers the recent nuclear testing extremely serious, because it has posed a challenge to the NPT and would undermine its very foundation. We consider the NPT to be the basic framework for global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Against this background, the recent nuclear testing by India and Pakistan, neither of which is a party to the Treaty, is a bold challenge to the international community. The States parties to the NPT are committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons through, on the one hand, a renunciation by the non-nuclear-weapon States of any intention to develop nuclear weapons and, on the other hand, the reduction and eventual elimination by nuclear-weapon-States of their nuclear weapons. In other words, the NPT is not a framework under which the nuclear-weapon-States are permitted to perpetually possess such weapons, whose possession is prohibited to other countries. As many as 187 countries subscribe to this idea, with the result that the NPT has gained the largest number of States parties of any treaty in the world.

Having said that, Japan does not in any way support the view that we must accept the testing as a fait accompli and act accordingly. Rather, it attaches great importance to Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), which was adopted following the tests. The Government of Japan also welcomes the strong and definitive message that the international community sent through the communiqués of the five Powers and the Group of Eight.

Now let me explain the initiatives my Government has taken to strengthen non-proliferation and promote nuclear disarmament.

First, immediately following the nuclear testing, Japan's then Foreign Minister Obuchi, now Prime Minister, proposed that an international forum be established on an urgent basis to consider possible measures to bring India and Pakistan to renounce their nuclear weapons programmes and to study appropriate ways and means of strengthening the global non-proliferation regime and promoting nuclear disarmament. Subsequently the forum was named the Tokyo Forum on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and the first session was held in August, with the participation of a number of prominent experts, both governmental and academic, from around the world. The Forum is expected to submit a report containing concrete and constructive recommendations which will serve as guidelines for future nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Secondly, the Japanese Government will introduce a resolution on nuclear disarmament at this session of the First Committee. The Japanese Government submitted for the first time in 1994 a draft resolution on the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, to demonstrate a clear commitment on the part of the majority of Member States to the elimination of nuclear weapons, and to prepare favourable ground for the NPT Review and Extension Conference the following year. The "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", adopted at that Conference in 1995, reflected this idea and referred explicitly to the ultimate goal of "the ultimate ... elimination of nuclear weapons" *(NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Decision 2, fourth preambular paragraph)* as a common goal of the international community. Since then the successive resolutions introduced each year have been adopted with the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States, including, last year, all the nuclear- weapon States. Based on these achievements, the Government of Japan intends to put forward a new draft resolution this year, with a view to gaining a global commitment to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Although that goal is widely shared, there is a divergence of opinion on the ways and means of achieving it. The Japanese Government has been advocating a step-by-step approach of taking concrete and realistic measures for achieving nuclear disarmament. From this point of view, the next step following the CTBT should be a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, as envisaged in the 1995 "Principles and Objectives".

Japan welcomes the Conference on Disarmament's decision to establish an ad hoc Committee on this issue. Although the Ad Hoc Committee could not commence negotiations this year, the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish it early in the next year's session so that the substantive negotiations can begin as soon as possible.

While the scope and structure of the fissile material treaty are still to be negotiated, Japan is confident that the ban on the production of fissile material will serve as a significant measure for both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Among the various issues which should be addressed during the negotiations on a fissile material production ban treaty, the question of how to deal with stockpiles will be one of the most contentious. Japan believes the problem of fissile material stockpiles is too important to set aside, and will require intensive deliberations on the most appropriate way of dealing with it.

In addition to the question of stockpiles, there may be some technical issues that have yet to be solved. In this connection, the Japanese Government organized a seminar on the "Technical Aspects of the Cut-Off Treaty" that was held last May in Geneva. We would welcome initiatives by other countries for the same purpose. The Government of Japan, having a wide range of knowledge and experience in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, will continue to contribute constructively to negotiations on this issue.

A fissile material treaty is undoubtedly the next multilateral step, but it is certainly not the final one. Considering that it has taken several decades for the idea of a ban on the production of fissile material to develop to the point at which actual negotiations have begun, we believe it is not at all premature to start deliberations on a possible step or steps to follow the fissile material cut-off treaty. In this light, it should be noted that the Conference on Disarmament conducted serious discussions on how to deal with issues related to nuclear disarmament, through presidential consultations. The Government of Japan highly appreciates the efforts made by the successive Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in this regard, and hopes that these consultations will soon produce an appropriate and effective mechanism for the discussion of additional multilateral measures to promote nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament is a responsibility that must be shared by the international community as a whole. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the nuclear-weapon States must assume the major responsibility. In this context,

nuclear reduction measures by the two largest nuclear-weapon States, the United States and the Russian Federation, are the most important. Japan appreciates the achievements of those two States to date and calls for the entry into force of START II and the commencement of negotiations on START III as early as possible.

It is noted that a number of nuclear disarmament measures have recently been carried out by some nuclear-weapon States. The strategic defence review initiative by the United Kingdom is one such example. Any unilateral action by the nuclear-weapon States for the reduction of their nuclear arsenals is welcome and creates an environment conducive to further nuclear disarmament measures by others.

Another measure worth mentioning is the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation on the management and disposal of excessive supplies of plutonium. This decision is surely going in the right direction.

Nevertheless, progress on nuclear disarmament in the past few years has been slow and has fallen short of the expectations of the international community. It is earnestly hoped that nuclear disarmament efforts will be accelerated and intensified.

As nuclear disarmament is an issue affecting the entire world, non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to be informed of progress and efforts being made in this area. Japan welcomes the efforts made by the nuclear-weapon States to that end at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, and continues to emphasize the importance of such efforts.

Let me now turn to the NPT review process. It is our long-standing and firm belief that the NPT has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. Both universality and full implementation of the Treaty are essential in order to consolidate the NPT regime. A significant step towards universality was made with the accession of Brazil, increasing the number of States parties to 187.

As for ensuring full implementation, it is appropriate to make use of the strengthened NPT review process, which was agreed as part of the decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty. It was disappointing that the Preparatory Committee at its second session was not able to adopt a report on the substantive issues. The status of implementation at present falls far short of the expectations expressed in 1995.

The Review Conference in the year 2000 is of vital importance, because it will provide the first opportunity to assess the implementation of the Treaty since the decision on its indefinite extension was taken. In order to attain the goal of the NPT, we should have a sense of history as well as a vision for the future. As the next Review Conference will take place when the new millennium is about to unfold, I would like to propose that it would be particularly opportune for the year 2000 Conference to herald a clear vision of our aspirations for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in the twenty-first century.

Let me briefly touch upon the CTBT. I take note of the statements recently made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India to the General Assembly on this issue. We consider those statements to be a positive step forward, although they contain some ambiguities. Hoping that their words will be reflected in concrete action, the Government of Japan strongly calls upon India, Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the CTBT, and upon other States which have not yet done so to ratify it, so that it can enter into force as soon as possible.

In the regrettable event that the Treaty cannot be brought into force in the three years after its opening for signature, a conference will need to be convened in 1999 to promote the earliest possible achievement of that goal.

I would next like to turn my attention to conventional weapons. In a number of regional conflicts it is conventional arms that are actually being used, maiming and killing thousands of people each year. Japan believes that a ban on anti-personnel landmines is a matter of priority for the international community, and wholeheartedly welcomes the entry into force of both the Ottawa Convention and the amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Japan has already concluded the Protocol, and we deposited the instrument of acceptance of the Ottawa Convention on 30 September this year. The Government of Japan calls upon all countries which have not yet done so to conclude these two international instruments on anti-personnel landmines as soon as possible.

The complete ban on anti-personnel landmines in accordance with the Ottawa Convention must be our goal. It is also true, however, that no small number of countries find it difficult at present to accept a complete ban. Against

this background, the Government of Japan is of the view that the conclusion of a treaty which prohibits the transfer of anti-personnel landmines will be a realistic and significant measure, and thus supports the draft mandate by the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament for an ad hoc committee to negotiate such a treaty. The Government of Japan hopes that a consensus will be reached on this draft mandate next year and looks forward to the early commencement of negotiations.

The international community is becoming increasingly aware of the tragic loss of life caused by small arms and light weapons in numerous domestic and regional conflicts around the world. Having recognized the magnitude of this problem years ago, the Government of Japan proposed setting up the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, and is gratified by the growing interest in addressing this issue. From 7 to 9 September this year the Government of Japan hosted the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms, to which it invited the members of the follow-up group of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms with a view to assisting them in their important work. Japan also welcomes the proposal by Switzerland to host in the year 2000 an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects.

Although international rules on weapons of mass destruction have been agreed, there is no such legal framework for reducing or preventing excessive and destabilizing accumulations and transfers of small arms and light weapons. It is high time for the whole world to come together to tackle the problem of small arms and move toward establishing a possible international norm. The Government of Japan is of the view that it should include both reduction and prevention aspects based upon the 1997 report of the Small Arms Panel.

Increasing transparency in armaments in order to reduce tensions is another important task. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has greatly contributed to confidence building among nations by enhancing transparency. While about 90 countries, including major exporting countries, participate in this system each year, about half the Member States of the United Nations continue to stand aside from this international effort. The Government of Japan calls upon all Members to participate in the system. At the same time, it believes that this system, including the categorization of armaments, can be reviewed and improved, for example, by introducing information on military holdings.

Allow me to touch upon another category of weapons of mass destruction: biological weapons. The Government of Japan welcomes the steady progress being made in the negotiations on the protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We also appreciate the added political impetus that these negotiations were given by the informal ministerial meeting held on 23 September in New York. Japan believes that the central pillar of the verification regime should be the "challenge investigation". It should also be stressed that the understanding of, and cooperation with, related national industries will be essential to ensuring smooth implementation of the BWC verification regime. Against this background, and as emphasized in the statement made by our representative in the ministerial meeting, Japan is willing to participate constructively in the negotiations with a view to concluding them at an early date.

While the international community strives to maintain and ensure peace and security, it is regrettable that action which is contrary to these international efforts was taken in Asia. The recent missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, whether or not it was an attempt to launch a satellite into orbit, not only caused serious concern for the security of North-East Asia, but also renewed our concern over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to express my appreciation for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Centre has been actively engaged in a number of programmes, known as the Kathmandu process, for disarmament and regional stability. It plans to organize a United Nations disarmament conference in Nagasaki next month to conduct discussions focused on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I trust that these activities will be continued and further promoted.

I would like to reiterate the Government of Japan's firm belief that disarmament can only be achieved by taking steady and concrete measures. While we must bear in mind the noble aim of disarmament, it is no less important that we be realistic. This should be our guide as we tackle the issue of disarmament, keeping in sight where we are now, what our final goal is and what the next best step should be. It is my sincerest hope that constructive and fruitful discussions will be conducted along this line in the First Committee this year. For its part, the Government of Japan will make every effort to contribute to achieving our common goal.

The Chairman (interpretation from French): I call on the Observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Hofer (Switzerland) (*interpretation from French*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee and to assure you of Switzerland's wholehearted support. My delegation is particularly pleased at your assumption of your high office. Your role, like that of Belgium, of promoting a pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament, and your commitment to a total ban on anti-personnel mines, guarantee fruitful results for this session.

The balance sheet of disarmament and arms control in the past 12 months reveals a contrasting situation. Progress has been made with the adoption of practical disarmament measures, particularly in matters of transparency and the verification of the elimination of certain arms categories, but that progress does not give cause for complacency. The First Committee must therefore evaluate these developments in depth in order to establish priorities for the coming year, bearing in mind, in particular, the spirit of the commitments on general and complete disarmament contained in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Among the positive developments in disarmament negotiations, I would like to point out the efforts made by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which, after a period of stagnation, has rediscovered its essential calling, namely, the negotiation of multilateral treaties. This result was made possible by the adoption of a programme of work that underlined the importance of nuclear disarmament. The Conference also set up a special committee for the preparation of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for military purposes. These two decisions constitute a political advance which Switzerland welcomes, even though no actual arms reduction has resulted from it to date. After the opening of the 1999 session, the Conference on Disarmament, if it wishes to attain its objectives, should pursue its negotiations with determination and take up the same operational declarations and decisions.

The expansion of the membership of the Conference remains a topical issue. At the last session the Conference was unfortunately unable to approve the intermediate solution proposed by the Special Coordinator. Switzerland, which welcomes efforts towards a qualified universality, still maintains that the Coordinator's plan represents considerable progress, and would like the presidency and the members of the Conference to pursue consultations before the end of this year so that the decision to welcome five new members can be made at the first meeting next year.

The Ad Hoc Group charged with the negotiations to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention has not proceeded at the pace expected by my Government. Switzerland plays an active part in the Group's work, in the interest of establishing an effective mechanism to monitor the universal ban on biological weapons. My Government expects significant progress to be made in this respect in the coming year. I would also like to take this opportunity to indicate that Switzerland would welcome it if the future institution to monitor the ban on biological weapons were based in Geneva, where this new body would benefit from numerous synergies and from a working environment tailored to its important missions.

Although the devastating risks of the weapons I have already spoken about demand a high degree of vigilance on the part of the international community, the greatest human tragedies are today associated with the use of conventional weapons. In this respect, I would like to raise the question of anti-personnel landmines. My Government is pleased that the Convention on the total prohibition of these mines, the Ottawa Convention, is scheduled to enter into force on 1 March 1999. It has also noted, with appreciation, Mozambique's willingness to host the first conference of the States parties in Maputo. Switzerland will support this conference by, among other things, facilitating the participation of delegations from developing countries.

The entry into force of the Ottawa Convention is only one milestone on the long path towards the total elimination of the scourge represented by anti-personnel mines. In fact, the full effectiveness of this Convention will depend on its implementation being coordinated on an international scale. The United Nations should play a key role in this process. It is in this spirit that the Swiss Government has decided to set up in Geneva an International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The enlarged Council of the Centre, with representatives from more than 15 Governments, will meet for the first time on 20 November 1998. One of the cornerstones of this institution is the establishment of a computer network linking United Nations demining centres in order to provide specialized United Nations units all over the world with the information required to accelerate and perfect demining programmes. Moreover, the second conference of the directors of United Nations demining centres will be organized in Geneva next February, bringing together international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Outlawing anti-personnel mines and putting them out of service must not make us forget their destructive effects. There are today gaps in the planning of assistance for the victims. For this reason, the Swiss authorities have taken the initiative, in agreement with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in particular, of developing a concept for helping the victims of mines that could be integrated into the health policies of the countries concerned. It is a matter of adapting those policies in order to reduce the intolerable suffering of the victims in a wider public health context. These ideas are contained in a document entitled "Berne Manifesto — Assistance for Mine Victims". My Government appeals to interested countries and international organizations to join it in this project.

The proliferation of light weapons and small arms is also a source of concern to my authorities. This highly complex area does not lend itself to solutions comparable to those found in the Ottawa Convention. We must therefore look for new solutions with the same determination. In Switzerland's view, a coherent multidisciplinary concept should be developed in order to reduce and prevent the accumulation and transfer of light weapons, as well as their illegal use.

The Swiss Government supports several initiatives to this effect and, in particular, is striving to encourage the work done within the framework of the United Nations. Moreover, my country is associated with the process that started at the first intergovernmental meeting on small arms, held at Oslo in July this year, which was followed by a meeting in New York organized by Canada and Norway. My country is also following with interest the international conference now taking place in Belgium on the impact of small arms on sustainable development.

Switzerland is working on a project for a system of international transparency that would include several obligations, among them the obligation to mark small arms and to declare their production, transfer and storage, in order in particular to contribute towards the fight against illicit trafficking. Further to the process started in Oslo, my country therefore intends to organize a follow-up meeting next year devoted to the marking of small arms and to the system of transparency.

In view of the urgency and scope of the problems raised by small arms, Switzerland is of the opinion that it would be useful to coordinate the various initiatives in this area. Here the United Nations could play a central role. My Government would in fact be ready to host a conference in Geneva, as soon as possible, on all forms of illicit trade in small arms. Such a conference, which is among the recommendations of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms chaired by Ambassador Mitsurio Donowaki of Japan, could lead to the formulation of a general plan of action against such weapons.

The ammunition used in small arms is obviously linked to the problems I have just mentioned. In this regard, I would like to refer to the next review conference of parties to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Last year, Switzerland organized a seminar on that conference. My country is making efforts in this field, and will invite the States parties to the Convention and the members of the Conference on Disarmament to a expert seminar to be held next year in Thun on questions of the methodology of ballistic testing.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, a reduction in arsenals is being envisaged through a decrease in the number of strategic warheads and a review of nuclear programmes, like that now under way in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, unfortunately, we still await the ratification of the START II Treaty by the Russian Federation. The Swiss Government reaffirms that it remains convinced of the necessity of making every conceivable effort towards the universal abolition of nuclear arms. In particular, Switzerland maintains that steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, such as those referred to in the statement issued at London on 9 June 1998 by the foreign ministers of eight countries, will open new prospects for disarmament.

The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) did not yield any concrete results, and we deeply regret this. Switzerland, which would like the international fight against nuclear proliferation to be marked by a drive to increase its effectiveness, expects the next session of the Preparatory Committee to create a solid consensual basis for the Review Conference.

It is imperative that the States parties to the NPT send a clear and unequivocal political signal on the principles of the Treaty, particularly in response to the disturbing events that occurred in South Asia in May. The Swiss Government has expressed its profound regret at the nuclear tests carried out by India and by Pakistan, which it regards as unjustifiable. In a wider context, an end must be put to the

spiral of regional tensions and problems; these must be settled peacefully. Switzerland, which has taken note with relief of the resumption announced for this week of a structured dialogue between India and Pakistan, recalls that it is ready to support these contacts. We hail the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and congratulate him on his support for this process.

The nuclear tests carried out by India and by Pakistan highlighted the essential non-proliferation role of the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In this respect, Switzerland will be following with interest the commitments made by India and by Pakistan through their statements to the General Assembly this September, and urgently appeals to these two countries to join the CTBT.

I am eager in conclusion to reiterate Switzerland's firm support of the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in the sphere of international security. Its activities promote disarmament and arms control, and my country is ready to offer the Organization all the support it requires for this purpose.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session. We are confident that under your expert guidance and direction the Committee is assured of productive and forward-looking outcomes. You will have our full support.

The past year has witnessed a number of developments which pose a challenge to our arms control agenda. Indeed there are some commentators who would have us believe that the nuclear tests conducted by India and by Pakistan in May of this year have fundamentally changed the parameters of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, pointing us away from cooperation, arms control and disarmament towards confrontation, arms races and the risk of nuclear war. To add weight to their argument, they cite the increase in ballistic missile development in South Asia and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, and the challenges to inspection and verification agreements posed by Iraq.

Unwelcome as these developments are, Australia, while not underestimating the difficulty of the task ahead of us, does not share such apocalyptic visions. For one thing, we in no way minimize the remarkable achievements of recent decades — lent added impetus by the end of the cold war — which have resulted in the conclusion of many bilateral, regional and international arms-control agreements. For another, while we acknowledge the tensions that exist between the proponents of non-proliferation and those of disarmament as to which should have primacy, we strongly believe that we have made, and can continue to make, remarkable progress on both fronts.

Our task surely must be to work with determination towards a situation where the right to self-defence of all nations, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, must be assured at the lowest possible level of conventional armament and without recourse to weapons of mass destruction. For, whatever the inequalities and inadequacies of the current regime, the alternative — a world in which each and every State could claim the right to arm itself with whatever weapons it deemed necessary for its national security — is one from which the international community has rightly recoiled for the past 50 or more years.

Any survey of the progress made to date in the field of arms control and disarmament will inevitably lead to two key conclusions. The first is self-evident: there is more work to be done, much more. The second is perhaps easier to overlook: in the face of periodic setbacks and challenges, it is vitally important and in the security interests of all countries that we stay the course on arms control and disarmament; that we not take for granted the value of what has been achieved to date; and that we maintain broad-based political commitment to the norms and institutions we have put in place or are preparing to build.

In the area of weapons of mass destruction, there is no doubt that the developments in South Asia these past months have posed a challenge to the non-proliferation regime and the instrument which is at its heart, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The year 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty will be a very significant event and one where the implications of the Indian and Pakistani tests will have to be addressed.

Australia does not subscribe to the assessments which led to those tests, least of all the spurious argument that they could be justified by the alleged lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States in meeting their article VI commitments. Nor do we believe that the testing of nuclear devices was the right response to India and Pakistan's security concerns, real or perceived. Indeed, we consider that the national security outlook of both countries, their regional neighbours and the international community have suffered greatly as a result of those tests. It is now for the international community to examine where we go from here in order to establish the peace and stability required in

South Asia in such a way that those countries in the region do not feel they need a nuclear deterrent, as well as to repair the damage done to the international non-proliferation regime to which the quasi-totality of the General Assembly subscribes.

Since the tests in May there has been some progress in this direction. Australia welcomes the recent statements by India and Pakistan in the Assembly indicating that both countries are moving towards adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The statements by the two Prime Ministers vindicate once again the value of the CTBT as a benchmark of internationally acceptable behaviour in the area of nuclear testing, and Australia urges both countries to take the necessary steps to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible and without any conditions. Ratification of the CTBT by India and Pakistan would be a critical step along the path towards bringing the CTBT into force, and we earnestly urge them to take it without delay.

But the rest of us — the 150-odd States that have so far signed the CTBT — do not need to await ratification by India and Pakistan and entry into force as we work to maintain the strength and momentum of the CTBT. Indispensable starting points are to encourage the widest possible signatures and ratifications and to build up the institutional fabric of the CTBT Organization. In particular, it is important to ensure the fulfilment of the Treaty specification that the verification regime be operational by entry into force, through continued strong support, both political and financial, for the development and operation of the International Monitoring System, the heart of the Treaty's verification regime.

Together with New Zealand and Mexico, Australia will be sponsoring a clear, simple draft resolution in which members of the Assembly will be invited to reaffirm their unequivocal commitment to the CTBT and the non-testing norm it embodies. We look forward to working with other delegations to ensure its adoption by consensus.

The very welcome resumption of bilateral dialogue by India and Pakistan and their agreement in the Conference on Disarmament to the commencement of fissile material cut off negotiations are also significant and welcome developments. We also have a firm expectation that both India and Pakistan will make further moves to demonstrate clear support for the international nuclear and non-proliferation and disarmament regime, particularly by adhering to the benchmarks laid down in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) of 6 June 1998.

Consistent with that resolution and the interests of national, regional and global security, we would also hope that both countries will work towards renouncing the nuclear option and joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime, the cornerstone of which is the NPT, is of fundamental importance to the security of Australia and its region. The sixth Review Conference of the NPT, which will take place in April and May 2000, will be one of the most important in the history of the Treaty. The third meeting of its Preparatory Committee in April next year will be a critical step towards building an outcome to the 2000 Review Conference which enables the non-proliferation regime successfully to address the most challenging period in its 30-year history. The challenges confronting the regime arise from the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests; Iraq's attempts to undermine the authority of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM); and recent actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which put the 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and that country in jeopardy.

Australia's goal for the sixth Review Conference is to achieve an outcome which will enhance further the strength and effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that this general goal will be attained through the achievement of the following series of subsidiary objectives to be attained by the time of the 2000 Review Conference: first, in the wake of Brazil's welcome accession to the Treaty, further evidence of Treaty parties' resolve to consolidate and promote progress towards universal membership of the Treaty; secondly, further progress towards the realization of the disarmament commitments embodied in article VI of the Treaty, including through substantive progress in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a fissile material cut-off treaty, significant further progress towards implementing the CTBT and bringing it into force and substantive progress in negotiations for a START III agreement following the expected ratification of START II by the Russian Federation; thirdly, entry into force of a significant number of additional protocols to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreements and significant progress towards the integration of classical and the strengthened safeguards systems as the international safeguards norm; fourthly, further progress in the establishment and strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones; fifthly, significant progress towards universal acceptance of the nuclear export control regimes as a necessary and legitimate mechanism for the effective implementation of Treaty obligations; sixthly, a strong

reaffirmation of the support of the Treaty parties for the IAEA and its role as the Agency responsible for verifying the fulfilment of parties' obligations under the Treaty and in facilitating the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; and, lastly, an agreement on an appropriate expression of NPT parties' views about, and commitment to, resolving nuclear proliferation concerns in the Middle East.

At the same time, we believe the Review Conference should adopt a new set of principles and objectives to guide nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament endeavours in the period leading up to the seventh NPT Review Conference in 2005. This would be consistent with the spirit of Decision 1 of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference that the new strengthened review process should be forward-looking.

The decision by the Conference on Disarmament in August this year to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty represented the starting point towards realization of a long-held and high-priority goal of the Australian Government. We have made it clear on numerous occasions that we view such a treaty as the next important step in the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, following the conclusion of the CTBT. The start of substantive negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament early next year will send an important signal that the international community has faith in the resilience of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and that it is committed to the principles and objectives which emerged from the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Completion of a fissile material cut-off treaty will also be a practical way forward towards our shared goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons — "an important and urgent reinforcing step in that endeavour", to quote the Canberra Commission.

The benefits which a fissile material cut-off treaty will bring to the international community are well known but nevertheless worth repeating. It will build on the CTBT by adding a quantitative dimension to the qualitative cessation of the nuclear arms race enshrined in that Treaty. It will bring all nuclear facilities capable of producing fissile material for use in nuclear weapons under legally binding international nuclear safeguards. By including the nuclear-weapon States, as defined by the NPT, and non-NPT States, the perceived imbalance of rights and obligations between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States will be addressed.

The treaty will create a security climate which is conducive to the dismantling of nuclear arsenals and to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by creating greater transparency and confidence about the capabilities, as well as the intentions, of countries with fissile-material production facilities. And finally, a fissile material cut-off treaty will establish a central and indispensable element in any verification regime for a world free of nuclear weapons.

An imaginative, creative and flexible approach will be needed in the negotiations if we are to craft an instrument which, on the basis of the Shannon Report and mandate, is truly non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable.

At the outset of my comments on the negotiations to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Australia would like to acknowledge the commitment and skill of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, Ambassador Tibor Toth, whose work throughout the year has been critical to progress so far. We have come some distance since the rolling text was adopted and the hard work of resolving key differences got under way. Having said that, Australia, along with many other delegations, has experienced a sense of frustration at the inevitably slow progress on this difficult negotiation. For that reason, in March 1998 Foreign Minister Downer proposed a number of ideas to enhance the political profile of the negotiation with a view to ensuring its successful conclusion at the earliest possible date.

After extensive consultations with delegations involved in the negotiations as to what steps might be most helpful, Australia went forward with the development of an informal ministerial meeting. Although the proposal began as an Australian initiative, it quickly developed a momentum of its own and became a truly cross-regional collaboration to support and advance the work of the Ad Hoc Group. The meeting, chaired by the Foreign Minister of New Zealand, The Right Honourable Don McKinnon, MP, was held here in New York on 23 September and issued a Declaration sponsored by 57 States parties to the BWC.

The Declaration recognizes the threat posed by biological weapons and the importance of strong and urgent action to ensure the strengthening of the ban against them. It expresses support for improving and strengthening the Convention through the negotiation of a protocol in the Ad Hoc Group, underlining the importance of fulfilling all aspects of the Ad Hoc Group's mandate. The Declaration

expresses support for the Biological Weapons Convention and for the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, including on securing necessary time for the Group to conclude its work. It calls on all States parties to redouble their efforts in the Group to complete the protocol on the basis of consensus at the earliest possible date. It also affirms continued high-level political support for the negotiations, including — after consultation with States parties to the Convention — through the convening of a high-level meeting at an appropriate time in 1999.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to us, as I am sure it is to others, that the common will recorded in the Declaration to securing necessary time for the Ad Hoc Group to conclude its work has already found practical expression in the decision of the Group at the conclusion of its final session for this year to allocate a significantly increased period of 16 weeks to the negotiations in 1999.

We must, however, work hard to ensure that this precious time is used productively and that the coming year provides decisive outcomes. One conclusion drawn by the Australian Foreign Minister at the time of the adoption of the Declaration at the informal ministerial meeting was that both the success of the meeting and the adoption of the Declaration were reflections of the degree of commonality in the views of the vast majority of delegations in the negotiation. That commonality far outweighs our differences.

In the view of Australia, those remaining differences will best be managed by looking forward to solutions, rather than backward to stale approaches. From an Australian perspective, we would re-emphasize our own interest in seeing the negotiation of strong verification machinery, including an appropriate system of visits to facilities coupled with a credible structure to meet the objectives relating to investigations. An important outcome of such measures would be to build international confidence in levels of compliance with the regime and transparency in its operations.

Australia is committed to continuing to work in a spirit of cross-regional cooperation and will devote every effort to the Ad Hoc Group negotiations in the year ahead, including through joining others in planning for a high-level meeting. Our expectation is that this time next year, we will be a great deal closer to conclusion of the protocol, thus taking an irreversible step towards eliminating the threat of biological weapons.

Australia accords high priority to the successful implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force on 29 April 1997. While there have been challenges, we welcome the important and positive steps taken by States parties and by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in implementing the treaty and consolidating the verifiable, legally binding norm it represents. Experience to date in implementing the Convention demonstrates the strength that that verification machinery adds to disarmament and arms control.

We are encouraged that the vast majority of States are meeting their Convention obligations and by the effectiveness of the OPCW routine inspection regime to date, including industry inspections. Australia has been happy to cooperate in three such inspections and is active in promoting support for, and ratification of, the Convention in our region.

Currently membership of the Convention stands at 117 nations, including the two largest declared chemical weapons possessors — the United States and the Russian Federation. This widespread support is evidence of the credibility of the Convention as a disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. It will be important, however, for the Convention to succeed in its goal of ridding the world of chemicals weapons, that those countries which have not ratified or acceded to the Convention do so. It will also be important for the continued integrity of the Convention and its verification regime that those States parties that have not submitted their declarations do so.

Australia, as a signatory to the Ottawa Convention, welcomes the recent attainment of 40 ratifications. Subject to the completion of our national legislative processes, Australia's aim is to be an original State party to the Ottawa Convention when it enters into force on 1 March 1999. Australia remains concerned, however, that a number of large producers and users of anti-personnel landmines remain outside the Ottawa treaty.

Accordingly, we believe it to be both important and possible to negotiate within the Conference on Disarmament a ban on the transfers of anti-personnel landmines — one which draws in the major traditional producers and traders of anti-personnel landmines and thereby complements the Ottawa Convention and contributes to its fundamental aim. As the Conference on Disarmament Special Coordinator on landmines in 1996 and 1997, I have been encouraged by the evolution of the approach of the key Conference on Disarmament States non-party to Ottawa in that time —

such that all these States, I believe, are now ready to agree to a negotiation to ban landmine transfers.

In our view, any work in the Conference on Disarmament on anti-personnel landmines consistent with the terms of the Ottawa Convention would contribute to reducing the human tragedy anti-personnel landmines cause, mitigate the enormous social, economic and political costs to the international community, and would be a thoroughly worthwhile and justified objective. It would bring Ottawa Convention non-signatories some way towards the norm established by that Convention rather than run the risk of there being permanently alienated from it.

Australia is also aware that a good proportion of the anti-personnel landmines currently in the ground, those being laid now and those which, notwithstanding existing legal instruments, will be laid in the future, are the results of the actions of non-State entities. It is important, therefore, that the international community attack both the supply and the demand sides of this conundrum — where it is not possible to persuade political groups to forsake the use of anti-personnel landmines, the international community, through the Conference on Disarmament, can take measures to diminish the international supply of these weapons.

This is what a transfer ban would do. While many of the traditional producer States have in place various kinds of unilateral moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel landmines, a legally binding transfer ban would serve to standardize the scope of these moratoriums, many of which apply only to certain types of anti-personnel landmines and are time-limited, and give them a secure and lasting basis in international law.

Effective arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation require constructive and enlightened leadership, the political courage to take a global approach in the knowledge that a more peaceful, stable and secure international environment is in the interests of all of us, the willingness to fund the institutions we fashion and in the negotiations that lie ahead of us the ability to work cooperatively towards the attainment of our common goals. With a determined effort, we can build the more peaceful world we seek.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): This being my first intervention in the debate, allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee this year. I am confident that your prominent leadership, experience and wisdom will guide this Committee to a fruitful conclusion. I take this opportunity to assure you that my delegation will spare no effort to support you and to make a contribution to the work of the Committee.

Despite the end of the cold war almost a decade ago, the world situation remains fluid and volatile. Conflicts triggered by ethnic, religious or cultural hatred are sweeping over many parts of the world, claiming innocent lives and precious resources, while the race in military spending knows no bounds. Nothing therefore seems more urgent or important for the international community than to seriously address the daunting task of creating a safer security environment, which will enable us to turn more of our resources and energy to sustainable economic development.

For this reason, my delegation considers that the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) should be a forum not only for reviewing what has been achieved, but also for finding out what should be done in the disarmament arena. We regret that the Disarmament Commission this spring failed to reach a consensus on the objectives and agenda of the special session. In our view, a balance must be struck in its agenda between nuclear disarmament and disarmament of other weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. My delegation earnestly hopes that a broad consensus on the objectives and agenda of the special session will emerge next year, paving the way for convening the SSOD IV in the near future.

Among the current disarmament issues before us, let me touch upon nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues. A series of nuclear tests conducted in South Asia last May dealt a blow to our efforts to move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is all the more regrettable that these tests took place in the wake of progress towards nuclear non-proliferation — namely, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). My Government joins the international community in urging the parties concerned to implement fully the measures prescribed in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) as early as possible. In particular, we call upon the international community to maintain constant vigilance in preventing the transfer of nuclear-weapons-related materials, equipment and technology to third States.

Despite the fact that this setback is temporary, our endeavours to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world can

afford no further delay, and these efforts should be strengthened and accelerated further. Along this line, I would like to share some ideas on how we could proceed with these urgent tasks.

First, the international community should make every effort to maintain and further strengthen the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime. The first steps towards this goal are to secure the universality of the NPT and to bring into force the CTBT at the earliest possible date. We welcome the decision by the Brazilian Government to accede to the NPT and urge India and Pakistan to follow suit. My delegation also hopes that the recent encouraging signals by India and Pakistan with regard to signing the CTBT will soon be translated into concrete actions. Likewise, North Korea should be urged by the international community to join this movement in order to avoid the embarrassment of being left the only remaining State not having signed the CTBT of the 44 States set forth in this Treaty. For our part, I am pleased to inform the Committee that my Government is now proceeding with domestic procedures to ratify the CTBT in the first half of next year.

Secondly, the next logical and practical step is to negotiate and conclude the fissile material cut-off treaty. My Government welcomes the establishment last August of an Ad Hoc Committee entrusted with negotiations on the treaty within the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee can achieve early success by accelerating the negotiations on a non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable treaty. In this process, we deem it essential to ensure from the initial stage the full participation of all the countries with nuclear capabilities, including non-States parties to the NPT.

Thirdly, nuclear-weapon States are called upon to make further concrete efforts to reduce their nuclear weapons with a view to achieving the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons. We recognize and welcome the recent decision by the United Kingdom to reduce its nuclear arsenal. We also commend the recent progress made by the United States and Russia in nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, however, these achievements fall short of the international community's expectation for more substantial progress in nuclear disarmament. The START process should regain impetus, as a major step by the nuclear-weapon States to discharge their obligations under article VI of the NPT.

Last but not least, the regional and subregional initiatives should also be encouraged in parallel. The expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the consolidation of existing ones will contribute to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation. In this context, we look forward to the early implementation of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which both Koreas signed in 1992.

Since the North Korean nuclear problem came to the fore in 1993, the international community has exerted strenuous efforts to bring North Korea into full compliance with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement. Unfortunately, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has so far failed to cooperate fully with the IAEA in implementing this agreement. It is imperative that, as a party to the NPT, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea implement the IAEA safeguards agreement fully and faithfully. The preservation and verification of all relevant information regarding North Korea's past nuclear activities is a sine qua non for the final resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. My delegation joins the international community in urging North Korea to respond to the call for full compliance with its treaty obligations, and to cooperate fully with the IAEA.

The Geneva Agreed Framework is an important agreement to address the North Korean nuclear problem. Hence, my Government has faithfully fulfilled its commitment to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) through playing the central role in the light water reactor project. We will continue to do so despite current economic difficulties, as long as North Korea lives up to the letter and spirit of the Agreed Framework. In particular, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is committed to maintaining the freeze of its nuclear facilities and to guaranteeing full transparency thereon. In this connection, any suspicion about the recently discovered large underground facilities under construction near Yongbyon should be cleared up fully and expeditiously.

The proliferation and use of chemical weapons are other sources of grave and urgent concern. My delegation commends the steady progress achieved by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) towards the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction during its first year. However, the Convention and the OPCW being at an initial stage, the full compliance of all States parties with the Convention is indispensable for attaining the goal of the Convention. At the domestic level, each State party is obliged to enact implementing legislation and to enforce it strictly. As one of the original parties to the Convention,

the Republic of Korea is committed to its full implementation.

Equally important is the urgent need for universal adherence to the Convention. Major possessors of chemical weapons that have not yet acceded to the Convention are called upon to do so without further delay. In particular, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to join the Convention promptly in order to make the Korean peninsula free from these horrendous weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation of biological weapons is another source of grave concern, due to their terrible destructiveness and easy accessibility. My Government has been a staunch supporter of the efforts of the international community to prepare a protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, designed to remove its weaknesses related to a verification regime. The Republic of Korea was one of 57 sponsors of the Declaration adopted at the informal ministerial meeting last month here in New York. Moreover, my Government has actively participated in the negotiations on the protocol in the Ad Hoc Group and looks forward to its early conclusion.

Missiles as a means of delivering weapons of mass destruction pose as serious a threat to peace and security as do those weapons of mass destruction themselves. In our view, the time has come for the international community to embark on exploring the ways and means to curb missile proliferation. This will require the collective political will of the international community. However, the experience acquired and accumulated through negotiations and the operation of legal instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction can also be instrumental in working out a legal instrument designed to curb the proliferation of the delivery means of such weapons.

North Korea's launching of a multiple-stage rocket last August has aroused international concern anew over the dangers of missile proliferation in North-East Asia. North Korea's test-launching has a serious security implication for the strategic environment in the region and beyond. The Security Council promptly expressed its deep concern over the matter. My Government calls upon the international community to take concerted action to stop the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from developing, testing, deploying and exporting missiles.

Upholding the basic principles of international humanitarian law, the Republic of Korea fully shares the international community's concern over the sufferings caused and costs incurred by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. In this spirit, my Government declared last year and has implemented faithfully an indefinite extension of its moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. My Government has also made financial contributions to the United Nations mine-action programme. We will continue to do so.

The paramount security needs on the Korean peninsula do not, unfortunately, allow us to forgo immediately the use of anti-personnel landmines as a major defensive weapon in the specifically limited area of the demilitarized zone. My Government is of the view that the Conference on Disarmament should work out a legally binding and universally applicable instrument banning the transfer of all kinds of anti-personnel landmines.

With the sporadic outbreak of local conflicts, the excessive accumulations of small arms and light weapons have not only had direct human costs, but also brought immeasurable social and economic dislocation. What concerns us most is that the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons is seriously hampering the efforts towards peace building after conflicts cease. Given the real and tremendous damage to lives and properties, the international community should address this matter with the utmost care and urgency.

The guidelines for international arms transfers, concluded at the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1996, can serve as a code of conduct for all States in arms transfers. We believe that this guidance will enhance transparency in international arms transfers, conducive to the eradication of illicit arms trade. It is also encouraging to see recent regional efforts to adopt binding legal instruments to that effect. We commend the adoption by the Organization of American States in November 1997 of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Production of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. We look forward to a global convention of a similar nature in the foreseeable future.

With regard to the future course of action on the issue of small arms and light weapons, my Government endorses the Oslo platform adopted last July. Given the complexity of the matter, short-term efforts must be focused on a comprehensive solution specific to each situation, while it is desirable to devise a global framework in a longer perspective. My Government also supports the

recommendation by the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms on the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade, as referred to in the General Assembly resolution 52/38 J.

Empirical lessons have taught us that the creation of a stable strategic environment should precede the achievement of any tangible disarmament measures. Despite the end of the cold war, however, uncertainty is still looming large in Asia. Together with many competing territorial claims, there remain potentially dangerous flashpoints. Further, the recent economic malaise is another source of concern, casting a shadow over the overall peace and security of Asia.

This uncertain security landscape makes it more important and necessary than ever to initiate a habit of dialogue on security matters and to institutionalize as necessary the web of security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region. It is with this belief that my Government has been committed to the process of the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF), currently the only region-wide Government-level security dialogue arrangement. Over the last four years, the ARF has made significant strides in developing and implementing various confidence-building measures in the Asia-Pacific region. The ARF is now poised to explore the possibility of employing preventive diplomacy measures and to move to a higher level of security dialogue in the region. Likewise, the establishment of a multilateral security dialogue in North-East Asia will serve to improve the security environment in the region, making it conducive to more transparency, more predictability and, finally, to enacting more tangible disarmament measures. My Government hopes that such a dialogue will soon materialize with the participation of all States concerned in the region.

Next year marks the centennial of the first peace conference at The Hague. Nevertheless, an ever-growing arms race and ceaseless conflicts still haunt mankind. Nuclear horror lingers on. Many daunting challenges to peace and security will persist, requiring our energies and wisdom for many years to come. Peace dividends do not come free of charge. They can only be earned by our collective hard work. The old truism remains as valid as ever: War begins in the minds of men and it is in the minds of men that peace must be constructed. My delegation earnestly hopes that this year's deliberations of the First Committee will make an important and positive step forward in our long endeavour to create a more peaceful and secure world.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second.

Mr. Kim Sam Jong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to speak in exercise of the right of reply with regard to the allegations made by the representatives of Japan, South Korea and some other countries, who referred yesterday and today to the Korean situation and the nuclear risk on the Korean peninsula. Some representatives urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come into full compliance with safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) immediately, while saying that they supported the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. This is a clear contradiction. According to the Agreed Framework, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is supposed to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreements with the IAEA when a significant portion of the light-water reactor project is completed. Even construction of the basement of the light-water reactor project by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), led by the United States, has not yet begun, although four years have passed since the conclusion of the Agreement, and it is expected to take at least several years for the completion of a significant portion of the project. This is the reality in terms of the implementation of the Agreed Framework.

Considering all these facts, we must question why there is the insistence that we come into full compliance right now, in contradiction of the Agreed Framework. Are those concerned really ignorant of the substance of the Agreed Framework; do they want to see the Agreed Framework collapse; or do they prefer to join in mere slander and pressure against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea without a proper reason? I would like to urge them to act with discretion and impartiality.

As for the issue of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, it can never be realized as long as there are nuclear threats against the North and a nuclear umbrella for the South. The South Korean authorities should stop begging for nuclear protection, and the United States should refrain from providing a nuclear umbrella to South Korea and give legally binding assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, if they really want to see a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

Our position on the satellite launch is clear. The satellite launch is a matter of the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. No country can interfere with it. Who can dare say we have no right to launch satellites? Since Japan, which has launched satellites many times, has never notified our country in advance, we are not obliged to do so. I would like to underline the reason why Japan is crying so loudly about our satellite launch being a threat to its security, while not saying even a word about satellite launches by other big countries near Japan. The answer is simple. The Japanese allegations prove that Japan has not discarded the ambition of invading Korea. If it had already discarded such an ambition, it would not have regarded our satellite launching capacity as a threat, because it is inconceivable that Korea would initiate a forceful attack against Japan.

History shows that Japan has invaded Korea many times, but Korea has never invaded Japan. Unless Japan attacks other countries, it will not be attacked. The fact that Japan does not cry about satellite launches by other countries seems to indicate that Japan cannot even think of invading them, but the case of Korea is different. What the Japanese are afraid of is that if they invade Korea their territory might be counter-attacked. The Japanese should know that the louder they cry about our satellite launch, the more they reveal their true intention of invading Korea. Other countries should distinguish the real intention of the Japanese, who have invaded Korea and other countries so many times in the past. If some developed countries continue to blame the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for its satellite launch, taking the side of Japan, it will be interpreted that they treat security matters partially and want the small developing countries not to possess high technology and to remain backward for ever.

As for the disarmament and security issues regarding the Korean peninsula, political and military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be removed first. At the international level the cold war came to an end, but on the Korean peninsula cold-war structures still exist. Politically, competition and confrontation between the North and the South are still instigated by the attempts to reunify the divided peninsula on the basis of one system by those forces backed by certain countries. The military situation reflects the political confrontation. The United States and Japan are backing the South Koreans to pursue their ambition of reunifying the peninsula based on their own system by devising the United States-Japan defense cooperation guidelines and the United States-South Korea Mutual Defense Treaty, and by forming a three-way military alliance against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. To cope with this military build-up against us we cannot but intensify our defence capacity for deterrence. This tense situation of cold-war confrontation, in which the North is confronted with a huge military build-up prevents the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from participating more actively in debates on various disarmament and international security matters at the United Nations.

Therefore, priority should be given to the dismantling of cold-war structures on the Korean peninsula, which should be done on the part of the United States, Japan and South Korea if those disarmament and security matters relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are to be resolved smoothly. Ignoring this reality and pressing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea unilaterally with regard to disarmament and security matters is nothing less than hypocrisy. The international community should not deny the fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is threatened by the military build-up of hostile forces and should demand that those countries concerned discontinue their political and military threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and demand the withdrawal of United States troops from South Korea.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I said in my statement a moment ago only that the recent missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had caused serious concern for the security of North-East Asia and Japan. In that connection, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fired a powerful rocket without giving prior notification through one of the most densely travelled airspaces used for civil air navigation between North America and the Far East, and that it fell in waters heavily used for maritime traffic and fishing activities.

I would also like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that when we launched a satellite in the past we notified, in accordance with the procedures stipulated by International Civil Aviation Organization and International Maritime Organization Conventions, those aircraft and ships travelling in the area which might be harmed due to a launching failure.

So we could not accept the criticism by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that we have not given any notice in the case of our satellite launchings in the past.

Mr. Kim Sam Jong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to repeat that although Japan has launched satellites many times, it has never notified us in advance. In this connection, we have no obligation to inform the Japanese in advance.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: I would like to recall that the Committee has not elected its Rapporteur, and I urge the Group of African States to expedite the process of nominating a candidate so that the Committee may do so.

We are grateful for the presence today of Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, particularly after his important mission for the cause of disarmament. On behalf of the Committee, I thank him for his presence today and for following the work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.